DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 158 415 EA 010 843

AUTHOR Wynn, Richard; Guerrieri, Donald J.
TITLE Manual for the Self Evaluation of School Boards.
INSTITUTION Tri-State Area School Study Council, Pittsburgh, Pa.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 48p.
AVAILABLE FROM Tri-State Area School Study Council, 5R29 Forbes Quadrangle, University of Pittsburgh, 230 South Bouquet Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260 ($2.00; $1.50 if prepaid; discount of 10% for 10 or more copies)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Board Administrator Relationship; *Boards of Education; Questionnaires; School Community Relationship; *Self Evaluation

ABSTRACT

Developed for use with 90 school systems in Western Pennsylvania, this manual was field tested and modified in some of those systems. It allows school board members to test themselves on six important aspects of school board operation: (1) the conduct of meetings, (2) relationship with the administrative staff, (3) educational program improvement, (4) personnel function, (5) school funds and facilities, and (6) school-community relations. Each section includes a number of criteria against which the board's performance may be evaluated. It is suggested that after each board member and the superintendent complete each section of the evaluation form, working sessions be scheduled to discuss the criteria and to search for means of making improvements where necessary. Making these improvements may call for workshops, outside consultants, task force committees, and further evaluation procedures. A six-page bibliography dealing with school board operation is included. (Author/JM)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

MANUAL FOR THE
SELF EVALUATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

by

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Published By
Tri-State Area School Study Council
Tri-State Area School Study Council
5R29 Forbes Quadrangle
University of Pittsburgh
230 South Bouquet Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

1978

Individual Copy - $2.00 ($1.50 if prepaid)
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INTRODUCTION

Faith in the local governance and administration of our schools is deep in the American tradition. Although the states commonly exercise legal authority over schools, much of the responsibility for the operation of schools has been delegated to local school districts in most states. Serving on school boards is a difficult task, a demanding obligation, and an awesome responsibility. It can be rewarding, not in terms of material recompense for the many hours devoted to it, but in terms of personal satisfaction from the improvement of the human condition through better education for children, youth, and adults.

But local governance of public schools is sorely troubled. In a recent Gallup Poll, only one-fourth of the respondents felt that their local school boards were doing an excellent job. Two-thirds of the respondents said that they would not be interested in serving on their respective local school boards. There are those who believe that local school boards have outlived their usefulness and that we must turn increasingly to state and federal government for fundamental solution of the problems of our schools.

In this milieu, it is inspiring to discover advocates who have not lost their faith in the local school board. Ruth H. Page an eminently effective local school board member and president, a county board member and president, president and executive secretary of the New Jersey School Boards Association, and a member of the Board of Directors of the National School Boards Association and as a member of many committees of that organization, has devoted a quarter of a century of her life to the improvement of public education through the strengthening of school boards.

Mrs. Page laments that she has been

> discouraged and distressed because so many board members, though men and women of good will, did not fully comprehend their role and thus wasted time and energy in useless pursuits and endless discussion of trivialities...Unless board members can function effectively to bring about change in education, either they will become merely diploma-conferring, cornerstone-laying dignitaries or they will simply become obsolete. It is no longer enough to be willing to serve on a school board and hope to bring about improvement in education, or to return education to the three Rs, or to improve discipline in schools. We need dedicated, effective, contributing members committed to finding ways of making education meet the needs of today's children.
>
> Success in re-election is not necessarily a criterion of effective service. Alas, too often exactly the opposite is true. An effective member is sometimes not re-elected because he has pushed for needed change which the system is not ready to accept.

> Is this reason for remaining ineffective? Far from it. It is reason for searching for ways to promote educational improvement with the sanction of the community, and I know it can be done. I have seen it done successfully again and again.

Mrs. Page believes that self-evaluation is the key to strengthening the performance of school boards.

> Only through careful, honest, open appraisal can a board hope to improve its performance and that of its superintendent. The board must recognize that the school system can be no better than the board. The best superintendent can go no further than the limitations of the board will allow. Board members must work to remove their limitations and strengthen their effectiveness if schools are to improve. Self-evaluations can be revealing and strengthening. They should be undertaken yearly.

The evaluation of school board functioning is what this monograph is all about. We think this evaluation is important for several reasons.

Accountability

Accountability is the watchword in education these days and evaluation is the handmaiden of accountability. Indeed accountability is impossible without performance evaluation.

Many boards believe that their credability and commitment to accountability and evaluation can be strengthened through systematic evaluation of the school board itself, not

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Ruth H. Page, What Makes an Effective School Board Member?, Interstate Printers and Publishers, Danville, Illinois, 1975, pp. 1-2.

only because evaluation is the route to improvement but also because it lets the school staff know that the board willingly meets the same accountability tests that it expects of its staff. It would make little sense to suggest that everybody in the educational enterprise should be evaluated except the governing body itself.

Communication

Evaluation can improve communication which is essential to effective governance. Evaluation requires that the criteria for making judgments about the board's performance be made explicit. Systematic evaluation can force attention upon issues and often resolve them rather than letting them fester. The process of specifying the criteria for evaluation improves communication and deepens understanding, as the reader will discover in using this manual.

Orientation of new members

One of the problems common to school boards is the fairly rapid turnover of membership and the discontinuity of operation which may result. The specification of criteria for evaluation provides some enduring guides for school boardsmanship which, like the policies which often result from evaluation, help to provide needed stability even when the turnover of membership is rapid.

Improvement

Finally and most important, evaluation is always prerequisite to improvement. Well-reasoned evaluation identifies shortcomings or failures and suggests means for overcoming failures. Just as schools depend upon report cards to prompt the improvement of student performance, so they might depend upon "report cards" on the board's performance to point the way toward its improvement.

USE OF THIS MANUAL

This manual was first developed for use with ninety school systems in Western Pennsylvania affiliated with the Tri-State Area School Study Council at the University of Pittsburgh. It was tested in some of these school systems and modified as a result of that experience.

The manual is divided into six parts, each dealing with an important aspect of school board operation:

1. the conduct of board meetings
2. the board and its relations with the administrative staff
3. the board and educational program improvement
4. the board and the personnel function
5. the board and school funds and facilities
6. the board and school-community relations.

Each section includes a number of criteria against which the board's performance may be evaluated. These criteria are derived from the literature on school boardsmanship and from the writer's thirty years of experience in working with school boards. The writer believes that all of these criteria are important and sound; that they represent the hallmarks of effective school board performance. They are widely accepted by most authorities in education. However, local circumstances do vary. So do some people's perceptions of the proper role and function of school boards. For these reasons, the first column following each criterion is captioned (0) "not important". By checking this column, one may eliminate any criteria which are considered inappropriate. The remaining columns can be used to indicate whether the criteria are satisfied (1) rarely, (2) often, or (3) always by the board which is being evaluated.

It is suggested that each board member complete each of the sections of the evaluation form. The superintendent should also be asked to complete an evaluation form since, in most school districts, the superintendent is by law a non-voting member of the board. A tally sheet can be used to record the aggregated responses of the board members and the superintendent. Copies of the aggregated responses should be reproduced and distributed to each board member. If the evaluation process is

terminated at that point, it will be of little value. The real value derives from open, frank discussion of the results of the evaluation in working sessions of the board. Six sessions might be scheduled with each devoted to one of the six sections of the evaluation form. We suggest that the discussion might follow in this sequence:

1. Identify those criteria which a significant majority of the board regards as "not important" and see if agreement can be reached to disregard those.

2. Identify those criteria for which there is significant disparity among the responses of board members and superintendent to discover whether further discussion of those items may result in greater consensus.

3. Identify those criteria which are "rarely" satisfied and then those which are "often" satisfied and search for means of improving them. Means for improving might involve:

   a. a change in school board policy or procedure,

   b. a need for workshops for board members to improve their skills or change their behavior,

   c. a need for an outside consultant to observe the board's performance and to suggest ways of improving it,

   d. the creation of board committees to study the problem further and to return with suggestions.

   e. setting a date for a second round of evaluation to assess progress toward improvement.

The manual includes a bibliography which contains material that may be helpful to the board in working to improve its performance.

It is important that the discussions of the board's performance be depersonalized as much as possible. The chairperson should insist that the discussion deal forthrightly with behavior but not with persons. Teachers are taught to evaluate and criticize student behavior without disparaging the student as a person. This is a critical distinction that board members should emulate. The board is a corporate body and should be evaluated as such rather than as a collection of individuals.

PART I - THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

The board meeting is the most conspicuous function of the board. Skilled board watchers are able to make reliable judgments about a board's effectiveness by watching its performance during board meetings. Effective boards are distinguishable from less effective ones by the quality of their preparation for the meeting, the businesslike procedures used in the conduct of the meeting, the nature of the dialogue, the demeanor of members, and the followup to the meetings. Board meetings are the lifeblood of school district governance. They should be a fine object lesson in grass roots democracy at work at its best.

Part I - THE CONDUCT OF BOARD MEETINGS

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
Preparation for				
1. Agendas are developed from input from board members and superintendent.	___	___	___	___
2. Agendas are available to board members, staff and public several days in advance of board meeting.	___	___	___	___
3. Agendas are accompanied by recommendations for action when appropriate.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
4. Agendas are accompanied by sufficient background information.	___	___	___	___
5. Board members study agendas, background information, minutes of previous meetings, financial statements, lists of bills, etc., before meeting.	___	___	___	___
6. If legal or other advise is needed, it is provided prior to the meeting.	___	___	___	___
7. Resolutions relating to routine business are prepared in writing in advance of the meeting.	___	___	___	___
8. Visitors are provided with copies of the agenda.	___	___	___	___
Procedures				
9. The agenda is followed as closely as possible; non-agenda items of non-emergency nature are simply presented for discussion or for listing on future agendas; non-agenda items of emergency nature are dealt with when they require immediate attention.	___	___	___	___
10. The tabling of agenda items for future meetings occurs when more study or information is needed and not simply as a means of procrastination.	___	___	___	___
11. The public is invited to speak to agenda items before action is taken by the board.	___	___	___	___
12. The superintendent is invited to speak to agenda items before action is taken by the board.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
13. The board follows written procedures for orderly conduct of business.	___	___	___	___
14. The board meeting room is conducive to efficient meetings and large enough to accommodate the public comfortably.	___	___	___	___
15. Meetings begin promptly and adjourn within a reasonable period of time.	___	___	___	___
16. The board meets both the letter and the spirit of "sunshine laws" in the conduct of its business.	___	___	___	___
17. The chairperson sets reasonable time limits for discussion and keeps the discussion on one topic at a time.	___	___	___	___
18. Roberts Rules of Order are adhered to when necessary to keep the discussion orderly.	___	___	___	___
19. Roll call votes are taken on those matters which the law specifies.	___	___	___	___
Demeanor				
20. Board members can disagree without being personally disagreeable.	___	___	___	___
21. Board members are able to work for the good of the school system even when they are divided by political, social, personal or other differences.	___	___	___	___
22. During times of controversy, board members keep their cool and avoid personalization of conflict.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
23. The chairperson sets a positive, fair, and businesslike tone for the meeting.	___	___	___	___
24. Once a vote is taken, the decision becomes "our" decision with commitment from all regardless of their original position on the issue.	___	___	___	___
25. Board members act with the understanding that they have no individual powers beyond those of an ordinary citizen outside board meetings.	___	___	___	___
26. Attendance of board members at meetings is satisfactory.	___	___	___	___
27. Board members remain open-minded on matters until all relevant information is at hand and discussed.	___	___	___	___
28. A summary of all significant board action is committed to writing and made available to all school personnel and the press.	___	___	___	___
29. Minutes are complete and accurate.	___	___	___	___
30. Minutes are stored in a safe and fireproof vault.	___	___	___	___

PART II - THE BOARD AND ITS RELATION WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

School districts with good board-administrative staff relations tend to have better administrator-teacher relations and better teacher-student relations. Human relations, whether good or bad, tend to be contagious throughout the organization. The relationship between the governance and the administration of a school district is an important and sensitive one, operating often in very delicate balance. Neither the board nor the administration can be fully effective if they are not compatible and supportive. Many incompatibilities can be relieved through better understanding of the proper role of the board and the role of the administrative staff, clarification of the board's expectations of the superintendent and his staff and the superintendent's expectations of the board, and through more effective definition of working relations, policies, and procedures.

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
Role Clarification				
1. The board confines itself to goal setting, policy making, program approval, evaluation, public relations and legally specified responsibilities.	___	___	___	___
2. The board avoids intrusion into the executive prerogatives of the superintendent and administrative staff except when executive actions contravene district policies or goals.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
3. The board does not permit intrusion of administrative staff into the policy making and other functions of the board.	____	____	____	____
Board's Expectations of the Superintendent				
4. Board expects and receives recommendations of superintendent and administrative staff on all policy considerations and other important matters on board agenda.	____	____	____	____
5. Board expects and receives the support of the superintendent and administrative staff on policy decisions and other actions of the board, even those with which administrative staff may disagree.	____	____	____	____
6. The board requires the superintendent and administrative staff to provide for the board all pertinent information--both good and bad--relative to matters under consideration, including probable consequences of all alternatives under consideration.	____	____	____	____
7. Board expects and receives from the superintendent and his staff impartial evaluation of all employees.	____	____	____	____
8. The board requires the superintendent to use other members of the administrative staff and faculty as needed to help the board receive the best possible input for decisions which it must make.	____	____	____	____
9. The board requires the superintendent and administrative staff to conduct themselves in accordance with high ethical standards.	____	____	____	____

	0 important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
Superintendent's Expectations of the Board				
10. Only personnel who have the recommendation of the superintendent are employed.	____	____	____	____
11. The board makes decisions on policies, goals, programs, budget, etc. only after input from superintendent, however not necessarily in agreement with such input.	____	____	____	____
12. Board members protect superintendent and administrative staff from unfair criticism.	____	____	____	____
13. Board provides superintendent with administrative staff adequate in quantity and quality to accomplish the tasks expected of administration.	____	____	____	____
Demeanor				
14. Superintendent and administrative staff and individual board members are committed to goals, policies, and programs after adopted by the board.	____	____	____	____
15. Criticism of district shortcomings and problems is open and vigorous but without personal incrimination.	____	____	____	____
16. Personal criticism is confined to executive sessions.	____	____	____	____
17. Reciprocal trust and respect exist among board members and between boards and administrative staff notwithstanding disagreement on various issues.	____	____	____	____
18. Superintendent and board members respect and treat with discretion privileged information growing out of executive sessions or other sources.	____	____	____	____

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
19. Board members strive to work for the best interests of students and the community even when the board is divided on issues.	___	___	___	___
20. Board members conduct themselves in accordance with high ethical standards.	___	___	___	___
21. Board and superintendent treat all administrators as important members of the management team.	___	___	___	___
22. Board members muster the courage necessary to make difficult decisions, to take positions on controversial issues, and then stand firm when necessary in the face of criticism.	___	___	___	___
23. Superintendent and board refuse to engage in passing the buck and keep their cool in times of conflict.	___	___	___	___
24. Each board member is his own man or her own woman unbeholden to special interests or personal interests unrelated to the welfare of children and the community.	___	___	___	___
25. Board members refuse to represent the board independently on board action.	___	___	___	___
Policies and Procedures				
26. Board and superintendent are committed to open communication with the public and school faculty (except with respect to such matters as negotiating strategies, property acquisition, and highly personal information).	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
27. Board strives to maintain administrators' salaries and other perquisites at a level that stimulates their best possible performance.	___	___	___	___
28. Clear job descriptions with delineation of major duties and responsibilities are provided for all administrators along with specification of criteria, developed bilaterally, to be used in evaluating performance.	___	___	___	___
29. Provision is made for periodic, frank, objective evaluation of the performance of all administrators with no threat of dismissal without clear specification of shortcomings and the provision of time and guidance for improvement.	___	___	___	___
30. Board requires superintendent and administrative staff to participate in professional development activities essential to maintain and update their knowledge and skills.	___	___	___	___
31. Board members participate in activities essential to improve their knowledge and skills.	___	___	___	___
32. Communication between board and superintendent and among board members is conducted as a corporate body in the presence of the superintendent with no secret or privileged communication exchanged outside the corporate body, even in board committees.	___	___	___	___

PART III - THE BOARD AND THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The prime reason for the existence of school systems is to provide fine quality educational experiences for children and youth. Effective boards of education do not permit themselves to become so preoccupied with matters of school finance, transportation, personnel, athletics, and community relations that they have no time to devote to the educational program. Indeed it might be asserted with reason that the better school boards devote more attention to <u>educational</u> goal setting, planning and evaluation than do less effective boards.

Goal Setting	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
1. The school district conducts systematic assessments of the educational needs of the school-community.	___	___	___	___
2. The school board has established priorities among the educational needs of the community.	___	___	___	___
3. The school district states its educational philosophy and makes this document serve as a guide to policy, planning, and decision making within the district.	___	___	___	___
4. The educational needs of the community and the educational philosophy of the district are translated into specific goals or objectives with target dates set for their accomplishment.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
5. Budget allocations reveal the same priorities and goals as those expressed in 2 and 4 above.	___	___	___	___
6. Educational goals and progress toward the goals are well communicated to the general public.	___	___	___	___
Policy				
7. The board weighs its actions and policies in terms of the best educational interests of students.	___	___	___	___
8. Board policy provides specific guidance to the staff relative to treatment of controversial issues in the classroom.	___	___	___	___
9. Board policy provides guidance relative to the selection of instructional materials.	___	___	___	___
10. Board policy makes provision for participation of the instructional staff in the selection of instructional materials.	___	___	___	___
Procedures and Resources				
11. The board provides adequate resources to maintain a quality of program commensurate with the community's financial ability.	___	___	___	___
12. The board requires systematic evaluation of the district's progress toward its educational goals.	___	___	___	___
13. Substantial time is allocated in school board meetings for reports and discussion of educational goals, programs, and accomplishments.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
14. The board provides a sufficient number of talented curriculum specialists, supervisors, and helping teachers, to assure quality control and improvement in its educational program.	___	___	___	___
15. The district provides sufficient resources for research and development of the educational program such as, professional library, testing programs, and teacher centers.	___	___	___	___
16. The board encourages staff development in curriculum and instruction through encouragement of attendance at professional workshops, visitations of other schools, local in-service programs, etc.	___	___	___	___
17. Students, teachers, and parents are invited to discuss educational needs and programs at board meetings.	___	___	___	___
18. The district provides physical conditions and interpersonal climate conducive to learning.	___	___	___	___
19. The district provides adequate educational opportunity for exceptional students with mental, physical, social, or emotional handicaps.	___	___	___	___
20. The board assures that specific aspects of the curriculum mandated by the state are being met.	___	___	___	___
21. The board assures that teachers participate in the development of the school's curriculum.	___	___	___	___
22. The school curriculum is sufficiently diversified to meet the different needs and interests of students.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
23. The entire school environment generates a strong love for learning among students and teachers.	____	____	____	____

PART IV - THE BOARD AND THE PERSONNEL FUNCTION

A school system should be a model employer. Children and youth should see in the school district's personnel policies and practices an object lesson that is the ideal for all enterprises. A school system can be no better than its faculty. All that a school district does it does through and with its personnel. All personnel policies and practices should be directed toward providing the best personnel policies available and toward establishing the kind of work climate that permits these people to work at their highest level of effectiveness.

Policy Development and Implementation	not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
1. The school board has established policy covering major aspects of personnel administration.	___	___	___	___
2. Written policy statement are made available to all personnel in the district.	___	___	___	___
3. The development of personnel policy is a cooperative endeavor including teachers, administrators, and board.	___	___	___	___
4. The board confines itself to policy making and entrusts the recommendation of applicants for employment and other executive procedures to the superintendent and his staff.	___	___	___	___
Records and Reports				
5. Records of school employees are complete and up-to-date.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
6. Personnel records are protected against fire and other hazard.	___	___	___	___
7. Personnel records are available to authorized personnel on a need-to-know basis.	___	___	___	___
8. Employees have access to their own records with the privilege of inserting materials on their own initiative.	___	___	___	___
9. Personnel accounting reveals the number and identity of personnel without certification in their present assignments.	___	___	___	___
10. The board monitors the personnel function through periodic reports from the administrative staff.	___	___	___	___
11. The school district periodically conducts studies of its personnel needs and resources as a basis for personnel planning.	___	___	___	___
Recruitment and Selection				
12. Recruitment of professional employees is conducted over a wide geographic area to maintain quality and quantity in a pool from which candidates are selected.	___	___	___	___
13. The selection of employees is made on the basis of professional merit without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, resident or other non-job-related considerations.	___	___	___	___
14. Effort is made to select personnel who are certified for the positions which they will hold.	___	___	___	___

Salaries and Fringe Benefits

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
15. A salary schedule has been adopted which specifies compensation for each type of position according to qualifications, performance, and experience.	___	___	___	___
16. Salaries and fringe benefits are competitive with those in comparable districts in the region.	___	___	___	___

Orientation, In-service, and Evaluation

17. Adequate orientation, supervision, and other help is provided for teachers.	___	___	___	___
18. In-service programs are developed cooperatively with teachers to meet their needs.	___	___	___	___
19. A teacher evaluation program is developed cooperatively toward the improvement of instruction.	___	___	___	___
20. The district conducts periodic studies of teacher morale and takes corrective action when necessary.	___	___	___	___

Collective Bargaining

21. If collective bargaining is conducted with employees, the board insists that its negotiators bargain in good faith.	___	___	___	___
22. Throughout the bargaining process including impasse resolution the board acts with the best interests of students and the community as its primary consideration.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
Equal Protection of Employee Rights				
23. The school district has an affirmative action plan and an affirmative action officer responsible for monitoring the plan.	____	____	____	____
24. Personnel policies and practices are examined periodically to assure that they are not discriminatory.	____	____	____	____
25. Grievance procedures are well-defined and well-publicized.	____	____	____	____
26. Due process protections are available to employees who are dismissed, demoted, or otherwise subject to involuntary actions.	____	____	____	____
27. Salary and fringe benefits are made available to all employees equitably.	____	____	____	____
Communication and Role Clarification				
28. Job descriptions, which specify minimum qualifications, duties, and responsibilities, are available for each type of position.	____	____	____	____
29. Staff vacancies are made known to employees who are welcome to apply.	____	____	____	____
30. Teacher handbooks containing personnel policies, procedures, rights, responsibilities, and other important information, are available to professional employees.	____	____	____	____
31. Official communication between the board and employees is conducted through the superintendent.	____	____	____	____

PART V - THE BOARD AND FUNDS AND FACILITIES

School laws commonly mandate certain minimum financial control procedures. Prudence requires certain other good business procedures to protect public moneys and to assure that they are managed efficiently. If school business management procedures are working properly, they will protect against mismanagement and act as a deterrent to the use of resources in a manner that is not consistent with the law and the goals of the district. The district will also be more able to make wise decisions regarding the implementation of educational programs and auxiliary services on a cost-effectiveness basis. It is of course not necessary for the board to handle all of the matters listed below but it is necessary that the board be satisfied that the matters are handled properly by the administrators to whom they are delegated.

Bank accounts	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
1. The board has authorized school district bank accounts in accordance with school law.	____	____	____	____
2. Banks have been advised not to cash checks payable to the school district but that checks must be deposited to school district accounts.	____	____	____	____
3. Checks are prenumbered and preprinted with the name of the school district including proper identification of the fund.	____	____	____	____

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
4. Unused checks are kept under adequate control and voided checks are kept and filed.	___	___	___	___
Petty Cash Funds				
5. The responsibility of the petty cash funds is vested in specified persons such as building principals.	___	___	___	___
6. Before any petty cash disbursement is made, the custodian of the fund prepares a formal voucher.	___	___	___	___
7. Petty cash funds are subject to audit.	___	___	___	___
8. Petty cash expenditures do not exceed a fixed amount established by the board of school directors.	___	___	___	___
Revenues				
9. The school district conducts an accurate annual census to project anticipated revenues and school enrollments.	___	___	___	___
10. School district policy mandates that taxing agencies, e.g. tax collectors, remit within several days of collection, tax monies collected and a report detailing sources of revenues.	___	___	___	___
11. The school district takes proper measures to collect delinquent taxes.	___	___	___	___
12. A lien is placed upon the property until said taxes are paid in full.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
13. Tax collectors' bonds are in force and of an adequate amount.	____	____	____	____
14. Monies received by the school district are deposited intact, on the day of receipt.	____	____	____	____
15. Receipts are supported by documentary evidence.	____	____	____	____
16. Only the school board exercises the power to exonerate tax liabilities.	____	____	____	____
17. The school board is careful about exonerations which establish a precedent.	____	____	____	____
Cash Disbursements				
18. Disbursements are made by check, not cash.	____	____	____	____
19. The signing or countersigning of checks in advance and the practice of drawing checks to the order of cash is strictly prohibited.	____	____	____	____
20. School district policy prohibits the cashing of accommodation checks and the lending of school district money, except for investment security.	____	____	____	____
21. When a mechanical checksigner is used, the signature dye and the keys for the checksigner are kept under adequate control.	____	____	____	____
22. Before any disbursement of cash is made, the school board approves payment in accordance with school law.	____	____	____	____
23. All supporting data verifying the authenticity of the payment are available for review by school board members.	____	____	____	____

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
24. Before payment is made, the business manager has the following source documents: purchase order, purchase requisition, purchase invoice, and receiving report.	___	___	___	___
25. Travel and convention expenses for school board members and school personnel are supported by documentary evidence.	___	___	___	___
26. The school board minutes contain formal motion of the board's approval for authorization of all payments.	___	___	___	___
Purchases				
27. Purchase requisitions on prenumbered purchase orders are used to originate or initiate purchasing activity.	___	___	___	___
28. The board gives formal approval of purchased items by adhering to legal requirements regarding advertising for or soliciting quotations for certain items.	___	___	___	___
29. The school board minutes contain formal motion of the board's approval for authorization of purchased items.	___	___	___	___
Investment Securities				
30. The purchase and sale of securities are authorized only by the board.	___	___	___	___
31. Securities are kept in a safe deposit box or on deposit with a corporate trustee.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
32. Securities are in the name of the school district and are periodically inspected.	___	___	___	___
33. Records are maintained for each security including certificate number.	___	___	___	___
34. School board policy requires more than one trusted person, authorized by the school board, to be present when examining or removing securities from the safe deposit box.	___	___	___	___
35. Based on an analysis of investment transactions and savings accounts, the school board determines that income from temporary deposits and investments have been properly accounted for.	___	___	___	___
Inventories				
36. A physical inventory is conducted at least once a year of all inventoried items.	___	___	___	___
37. Inventories are covered by adequate insurance and proof of loss can be established.	___	___	___	___
38. Before inventoried items are disbursed, a formal requisition is completed by those persons requesting the materials.	___	___	___	___
Property, Plant, and Equipment				
39. Up-to-date records are maintained for plant properties, plant, and equipment with records of date of purchase, serial numbers, etc.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
40. Periodic inventories of plant assets are taken.	___	___	___	___
41. Plant assets are adequately insured and periodic appraisals are made for insurance purposes.	___	___	___	___
42. The school district maintains contracts, deeds, titles, and other evidence of ownership of plant assets in secure place.	___	___	___	___
43. The school district has a well defined policy on accounting for capital additions (as opposed to maintenance and repairs) in order to support state approved tuition rates and state reimbursements on account of instruction.	___	___	___	___
Notes Payable and Bonded Debt				
44. The school district's borrowing capacity is maintained at a level adequate for its needs.	___	___	___	___
45. Borrowing is authorized by the school board.	___	___	___	___
46. The school district avoids borrowing to pay off past borrowing and borrows only against anticipated taxes.	___	___	___	___
47. Ample revenues are set aside to pay off notes.	___	___	___	___
48. Paid notes are properly cancelled and acccounted for.	___	___	___	___
49. Capital outlay bond funds are kept separate from other funds.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
50. Paid bonds and interest coupons are properly accounted for and canceled.	____	____	____	____
Construction Contracts				
51. Construction contracts are awarded to the lowest responsible bidder after due public notice for competitive bids is given.	____	____	____	____
52. Contractors supply bonds with sufficient surety in amounts fixed by the school board for the faithful performance of the contracts and for assurance of payment of materials and labor.	____	____	____	____
53. The insurance coverage required under the contracts has been provided and is in force.	____	____	____	____
Budget				
54. The annual budget is supported by adequate work sheets.	____	____	____	____
55. Budgetary control of expenditures strictly adheres to the school law.	____	____	____	____
56. School board members are furnished with a budget status report each month.	____	____	____	____
57. The budget is formally approved by the majority of the school board and properly advertised.	____	____	____	____
58. Budget transfers are duly authorized and formally recorded in school board minutes.	____	____	____	____

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
59. If the budget is overexpended, such overexpenditures are within the provisions of the law.	___	___	___	___
General				
60. Employees in position of trust are bonded; adequacy of the bonds are reviewed and approved by board.	___	___	___	___
61. Financial reports are submitted on a timely basis and in accordance with the provisions of the school law.	___	___	___	___
62. The business manager periodically reviews all insurance coverage.	___	___	___	___
63. School board members and school administrators maintain freedom from conflict of interest with business enterprises with which the school district does business.	___	___	___	___
64. The school board engages a certified public accounting firm, preferably one that specializes in school audits, to perform its annual school audit.	___	___	___	___
65. The audit includes all school district accounts, activities, funds and taxing agencies.	___	___	___	___

PART VI - THE BOARD AND SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

There is research evidence to support the belief that schools in a given community can not be better than the people of the community want them to be, given our system of local control of schools. This does not mean that schools are always as good as people want them to be. It means only that the level of public understanding and expectation of schools sets a ceiling beyond which schools can not usually improve further. Effective school systems seem to be characterized by a high level of public understanding of them, the product of careful attention to school-community relations.

Community Participation

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
1. The school board actively encourages public participation in board meetings.	___	___	___	___
2. The school board utilizes citizen advisory committees in deepening understanding of possible solutions to difficult problems.	___	___	___	___
3. The school board involves the community effectively in systematic needs assessment and in goal prioritization surveys and uses this information in program and budgeting.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
4. The school district involves students and citizens in the evaluation of its educational programs.	___	___	___	___
5. The school district distributes to the community an annual report of school district progress and problems.	___	___	___	___
6. The school board invites special input from school-oriented and youth-oriented groups, such as PTAs.	___	___	___	___
7. The school board welcomes input from students in decision making that is closely related to their interests and needs.	___	___	___	___
8. The district maintains a community resources file of persons and groups within the community with special talents that the district may capitalize upon when needed.	___	___	___	___
9. The school board systematically evaluates the effectiveness of its community relations program perhaps with the help of a citizens advisory committee.	___	___	___	___
Community Study				
10. The school board requires periodic study and projection of demographic, economic, and other changes taking place among the population and uses these data for educational planning.	___	___	___	___
11. The district promotes child-study groups and parent education programs.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
12. The district conducts follow-up studies of its graduates to generate information useful in the improvement of program and services.	____	____	____	____
Communication and Public Understanding				
13. School board members promote public pride in schools in their dialogue at board meetings and in their interaction with the community.	____	____	____	____
14. The school district distributes parent handbooks containing important information for parents.	____	____	____	____
15. Individual board members and members of the professional staff welcome opportunities to speak to community groups on school matters.	____	____	____	____
16. School board members use school board election campaigns effectively to raise public understanding of educational issues.	____	____	____	____
17. The school district conducts public opinion polls among citizens and students on important educational issues.	____	____	____	____
18. The school board holds public hearings when engaged in crucial decision making, such as in the search for a new superintendent, cutbacks in programs or staff, school budget adoption, etc.	____	____	____	____
19. The school board prepares and distributes to the community copies of proposed school budgets with sufficient interpretative information to make them understandable to lay citizens.	____	____	____	____

	0 not information	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
20. Information presented to the community is balanced and objective; shortcomings or failures are related as openly as successes.	___	___	___	___
21. The school district systematically distributes announcements of changes in policies, programs, practices, and events through newsletters to citizens.	___	___	___	___
22. The school board provides sufficient resources for effective teacher-parent conferences.	___	___	___	___
23. The school board holds someone responsible for preparing news releases on important events and accomplishments of the district.	___	___	___	___
24. The board systematically invites the news media to important discussions or briefings on important developments in the school.	___	___	___	___
25. The school district holds seminars or briefings for persons in the community with special interests in the schools, such as realtors, chamber of commerce, clergymen, etc.	___	___	___	___
26. The school district includes public relations training in its in-service programs for the school staff.	___	___	___	___
27. Teachers, secretaries, receptionists, telephone operators, and others are helped to be conscious of the effectiveness of their relations with the public.	___	___	___	___
28. Courses in social studies devote emphasis to understanding the importance of public education and the problems of schools to help				

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
young citizens gain the understanding they will need to appreciate and support schools appropriately in later life.	___	___	___	___
29. The school district capitalizes fully on the public relations potential inherent in school events, such as commencements, homecomings, alumni reunions, National Education Week, etc.	___	___	___	___
30. The school district publicly recognizes significant accomplishments of its individual students and teachers with at least the same intensity that it recognizes their problems or difficulties.	___	___	___	___
31. The school district maintains close and effective relations with other educational institutions in the community, such as parochial schools and community colleges.	___	___	___	___
32. The district distributes school calendars widely to inform citizens of important events throughout the year.	___	___	___	___
33. The school board guarantees public access to all non-confidential information in the district.	___	___	___	___
34. The board strives to interpret proposed state and federal legislation relating to education to the local community.	___	___	___	___
Services to the Community				
35. The district maintains an adequate staff of specialists to perform essential service to the community, such as home and school visitors, public information specialists, ombudsmen, etc.	___	___	___	___

	0 not important	1 rarely	2 often	3 always
36. School board policy encourages public use of school facilities.	___	___	___	___
37. New school buildings are planned to facilitate their use by the public.	___	___	___	___
38. The district encourages and recognizes effective participation of the school staff in community organizations.	___	___	___	___
39. The school board supports adequate programs of adult education.	___	___	___	___
40. The school district facilitates the return of school dropouts of all ages into the school program.	___	___	___	___

SOME SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL HELP

General

Anderson, B. Robert: Basic Boardsmanship, New Jersey School Boards Association, Trenton, NJ, 1975. Emphasizes the group dynamics of effective boardsmanship and how individual board members may work effectively with the group.

Ashby, Lloyd W.: The Effective School Board Member, Interstate Printers and Publishers, Danville, Ill., 1968. Practical discussion of how board members may improve their effectiveness both individually and collectively.

Cistone, Peter J. (ed.): Understanding School Boards: Problems and Prospects, Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass., 1975. Collection of papers dealing with the problems of local school governance and how it can be improved.

National School Boards Association: On Board: A Learning Experience in School Board Problem-Solving, NSBA, Washington, D.C., 1972. A discussion guide related to NSBA's excellent film presenting cases of school board responses to dilemmas common to boards.

National School Boards Association: School Boards: A Creative Force, NSBA, Washington, D.C., 1967. General discussion of the opportunities facing boards for creative leadership in school governance.

Odiorne, George S.: Management and the Activity Trap, Harper and Row, New York, NY, 1974. Emphasizes the importance of definition of objectives and monitoring progress towards them, rather than preoccupation with activities.

Page, Ruth S.: What Makes An Effective School Board Member? Interstate Printers and Publishers, Danville, Ill., 1976. Characteristics and behavior of effective school boards described with emphasis upon goal setting, evaluation, and high-ethical standards.

Pennsylvania School Boards Association: To Use These Talents, PSBA, Harrisburg, PA., 1973. Excellent guide to board members' responsibilities and orientation to the position of school board membership.

Rose, Lowell C. (ed.): Handbook for School Board Members, Indiana School Boards Association, Bloomington, Ind., 1970. Handbook of information relative to effective school boardsmanship and a guide to effective performance.

School Board Meetings

Davidson, Jack L.: Effective School Board Meetings, Parker Publishing Co., W. Nyack, NY, 1971. Practical suggestions on how school boards may make their meetings more effective.

National School Boards Association: School Board Meetings, NSBA, Washington, D.C., 1976. Summary of research on effective meetings stressing goal-seeking behavior, evaluation of meetings, and incorporation of good practices into board bylaws and policies.

Russell, Kenneth L.: The How in Parliamentary Procedure, Interstate Printers and Publishers, Danville, Ill., 1976. Simplified application of parliamentary procedure described to make meetings smoother and more effective.

School Board Policy

National School Boards Association: Educational Policies Service of NSBA, NSBA, Washington, D.C., n.d. A series of publications designed to help local boards establish and maintain more effective policies; includes reference manual, reports on updating policy, and reference help on specific aspects of policy.

Strauss, Robert F.: School Board Policies and Your Board of Education, New Jersey School Boards Association, Trenton, NJ., 1973. Discussion of importance of good policies and how boards can develop and profit from good policies.

Wilson, Robert E.: School Board Policies: What Are They? How To Write Them, Ohio School Boards Association, Columbus, Ohio, 1968. Discussion of scope and nature of school board policies and how boards can develop them most effectively.

School Board-Administrator Relations

American Association of School Administration: Roles and Responsibilities, of School Board, Superintendent, and Staff, AASA, Arlington, VA., 1963. Delineation of proper roles and responsibilities of boards and their administrative staffs and how working relationships among them can be strengthened.

Dykes, Archie, R.: School Board and Superintendent: Their Effective Working Relations, Interstate Printers and Publishers, Danville, Ill., 1965. Discussion of how school boards and superintendents can clarify their respective roles and improve their working relationships.

Educational Research Service, Evaluating Superintendents and School Boards, ERS, Arlington, VA., 1976. Statement of principles and collection of documents used by various districts in evaluating school board and superintendent performance.

Nunnery, Michael Y.: Effective Educational Leadership: The School Board/Superintendent Team, Florida School Boards Association, Tallahassee, FL, n.d. Discussion of how boards and superintendents can define their respective roles and work together most effectively.

School Board and Public Relations

American Association of School Administrators: PR for School Board Members, AASA, Arlington, VA., 1976. Stresses importance of effective communication in public relations with practical guides for improving communication through board meetings, news media, district publications, and feedback.

Johnson, Robert H., and Roy O. Frantz: The School Board and Public Relations, Exposition Press, New York, NY, 1964. Discussion of the importance of effective board relations with the public and guide to establishing such relations.

National School Boards Association: The People Look At Their School Boards, NSBA, Washington, D.C., 1975. Report of a national study of public opinion relative to the quality of boards' performance, the public image of boards, and how much the public knows about its school boards.

Robinson, Thomas E., George Reinfeld, and Timothy B. Robinson: 101 Public Relations Activities for Schools, Interstate Printers and Publishers, Danville, Ill., 1976. Collection of sensible ways of improving schools' public relations, emphasizing that good educational programs are the foundation of good PR.

School Board and the Educational Program

American Association of School Administrators: The Evaluation of Instructional Programs, AASA, Arlington, VA., 1975. Discussion of systematic approaches to the evaluation of instructional programs with consideration of procedures and goal-related criteria.

School Board and Personnel Management

American Association of School Personnel Administrators: Standards for School Personnel Administration, AASPA, Walnut Creek, CA., 1972. Delineation of basic principles of personnel administration, which are useful in establishing policies and procedures, and standards for evaluation of personnel policies and practices.

Greenfield, T.B., et. al.: Developing School Systems: Planning, Organization and Personnel, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, Canada, 1969. Excellent guide to the entire range of school district governance and management functions

including inventories of essential tasks.

School Board and Finance and Business Management

Johns, Roe L. and Edgar L. Morphet: Planning School Finance Programs, National Educational Finance Project, Gainesville, FL., 1972. A study guide for the improvement of the financing of education with primary attention to state finance programs.

Phi Delta Kappa: Financing The Public Schools, Phi Delta Kappan, Bloomington, Ind., 1973. Report of a study of school finance with emphasis upon what educational programs and services should be provided, where the money comes from, and the alternatives available.